

Honorable Judge David Matia
1200 Ontario Street
Courtroom 17-D
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

March 15, 2019

Honorable Judge Matia

I am writing you to express how it felt when you stopped me from reading my impact statement by telling me that you had already read the statement and that I did not need to read it. I was very confused and felt frustrated. When you told me this, I was unable to speak. I felt as though no matter what I said it wasn't what I really wanted or needed to say. This past week after the sentencing, I have felt squashed, depressed and unable to talk about the sentencing. I had thought all along this was my right as a survivor to prepare and address the court with my impact statement in order to heal and move forward in a positive way. I had been writing bits and pieces since the indictment in July 2018. I understood this to be my opportunity to speak my truth, be able to start to let go, start really living my life again once I'd have spoken my piece. I wanted and needed to give words back to the perpetrator. The words he used as part of his twisted game to control, abuse and rape me. In my impact statement I was able to use those same words he had used towards me to show how I'd persevered.

My experience with the justice system was hard and confusing. I had to move many obstacles out of the way to get to this conviction. Everywhere I turned in the justice system, I had to take on something else not being done by the people who were supposed to be working on my behalf. I needed to have my say to reach my freedom from the hell I've been in. I wanted to be free and elated after my day confronting him in court, but instead I feel anger because once again I experienced being not heard. I'm happy this day came, but I didn't get the chance to say all that I had to say because you did not request or invite me to do this in your courtroom on my day that I was to finally get my justice. I am writing because I do not want to feel or be "a victim" any longer, so I am addressing this directly with you to once again stand up for myself and let you know that how this was handled was not ok for me. It is my hope that you will learn from what I have to say here and not do this again, to make it better for the next survivor who comes into your court.